

ULTIMATE ENDEAVOUR

Osprey champion sailors **Matt Burge** and **Toby Lewis** reveal how they won this year's Endeavour Trophy to **Sue Pelling**, plus top tips on how to secure your invitation to the event ▶



RIGHT Xxx

When Matt Burge and Toby Lewis made a snap decision to take the opposite leeward gate mark to the leading duo of Matt Mee and Tom Pygall – their closest rivals in the closing stages of the final race – it produced one of the most nail-biting finishes ever at the Endeavour Championship.

Burge and Lewis, who were representing the Osprey class from Poole YC, also picked up a favourable shift as they rounded the mark, which allowed them to inch ahead of the Merlin Rocket duo, and cross the finish line just a couple of seconds ahead of Mee and Pygall to secure the 2014 Endeavour Championship.

This year's Royal Corinthian Yacht

destined to be close. For the Osprey team to win, they had to finish ahead of the Merlin Rocket team.

Ian Dobson and Holly Scott (GP14) established an impressive one-minute lead over Mee and Pygall (Merlin Rocket) early on and maintained their position to the finish which left them in third place overall. In the closing stages of the final race, however, Burge and Lewis were back in contention after being buried at the start.

Matt Burge explains: 'The Merlin boys were beating us all the way round the racecourse, but we had a phenomenal last run. We then opted for the opposite leeward gate mark to them, found a nice bit of breeze, tacked on a shift, then slogged our guts out to the finish line. I'd never hiked so hard and my legs were trembling. We beat them



Overall results (eight races, 1 discard)

1st	Osprey	Matt Burge / Toby Lewis	(21pts)
2nd	Merlin Rocket	Matt Mee / Tom Pygall	(22pts)
3rd	GP 14	Ian Dobson / Holly Scott	(23pts)
4th	Lark	Charlie Roome / Jeremy Stephens	(33pts)
5th	Streaker	Tom Gillard / Sam Brearey	(33pts)
6th	Mirror	Rachel Grayson / Nigel Wakefield	(37pts)

and I probably owe our success to him.'

Endeavour one-designs

The diverse entry at the Endeavour Championship, which includes singlehanded, doublehanded, heavy and lightweight crews means that to ensure racing is as fair as possible, strict one-designs are selected for the event. The first event in 1961 was sailed in Enterprises. Since then numerous classes have been used for the event including the GP14, Laser 2, Lark, Enterprise, and RS400, with the Ian Howlett-designed Topper Xenon used for the last nine years.

A new class, the Topper Argo made its debut this year. Like the Xenon, the Argo has no class championship, which means no one sailor has an unfair advantage. However, the Argo is 40kg lighter than the Xenon and carries less sail area, which means the new 'Endeavour design' should lower the overall crew-weight range. The sailors' reactions were as mixed as they classes they came from: Mirror national champion Rachel Grayson commented that, 'The main was bigger and hull much heavier than I am used to, which took some getting used to but when it got going in the heavy winds it was very fast and exciting.'

Toby Lewis, the four times Endeavour Trophy-winning crew, ▶

“The Endeavour has inspired me and gave me the confidence to start helming the RS200”

Rachel Grayson (16)

Club-hosted and Topper Sailboats-supported event took place from October 31-November 2, and was not only one of the closest on record but also produced some of the best sailing weather ever seen at the Endeavour Championship. Scorching sunshine on Friday with temperatures in the 20s gave way to a warm, southerly light to moderate breeze on Saturday, and fresh, planing conditions on the final day.

With the breeze up and just one point separating the leading two boats (Osprey and Merlin Rocket) going into the final race, the situation was

across the line by half a boat length.'

Commenting on his win, he added: 'Winning the Endeavour Trophy is quite emotional. It has always been the event of all events I've wanted to win, so now I feel I can die happy having won it.'

Toby Lewis, a four-times Endeavour champion crew (twice with Nick Craig), added. 'It is great to win it with Matt. We had a tough day today, and a real fight on our hands. It was just an excellent last race. In both races we were buried at times but through sheer determination we pulled through.'

Second placed Matt Mee and Tom Pygall (Merlin Rocket) certainly didn't make it easy for the eventual winners. Pygall commented: 'Yes, it was disappointing not to have won but we had a fantastic event. It was the first time I've sailed with Matt, and what a great guy he is to sail with. He is a legend really. We worked well together and I think the Argo is the type of boat that rewards teamwork, so yes, we really enjoyed it.'

Charlie Roome and Jeremy Stephens (Lark) demonstrated some impressive bursts of speed throughout the weekend

and although they included two first places in their scoreline, they had to count a seventh and a ninth, which left them in fourth overall. Tom Gillard (Streaker), whose father Alan won the Endeavour Trophy in 1986, looked set to challenge the title on occasions scoring a string of three, second places but he and his crew Sam Brearey also had to count a couple of big numbers so had to settle for fifth overall.

At 16 years old, Rachel Grayson (Mirror) was not only one of the youngest helmsmen at the event but according to available records she is now

the highest placed female helmsman ever. Grayson, who finished in sixth overall with crew Nigel Wakefield, was noted for her skill, professional composure and her consistent performance throughout the weekend.

Commenting on her result, the ever-modest Grayson concluded: 'It was really fun and I cannot believe where we finished. My biggest fear was potentially finishing last in every race, and I really didn't expect to be any good, particularly as it was also my first time sailing with an asymmetric spinnaker. I did have an amazing crew, so that helped

I sail in, plus it had had the largest fleet of any nationals I have sailed this year, and had the toughest competition.'

Preparations/tactics: 'We didn't know we were going until the last minute so there wasn't much time for preparation. Sam (Brearey) my crew and I had spoken about sailing together if we were invited but the only time we sailed together within the last three years was the Scorpion nationals this year.'

'We know each others' mechanics in the boat, Sam feeds me information and effectively gives me options. Sam is also incredibly fit, which helps a lot.'

Endeavour advice: 'It pays to remember that

starting and the first beat is 95 per cent of the race, especially on a river.'

Female helmsman Rachel Grayson (16)

Studies: AS levels in Chemistry, Biology, Maths and French at New College, Pontefract
2014 wins: Mirror national and European championships

Sailing Club: Beaver SC

She says: 'I was buzzing all the way home, I rang every member of my family and made plans to move into helming the RS200 with my sister. The Endeavour had a massive effect on me. It inspired me and gave me the confidence to start

helming the RS200 which I'd been putting off for a while thinking I wasn't good enough. I feel much more positive now I just want to do it again.'

Preparations/tactics: 'Nigel offered to crew for me, so I leapt at the chance. We didn't do any training and it was, in fact, only the second time we'd met, the first being at the Mirror nationals in 2013. I was very busy leading up to the Endeavour so too busy to practice. However, our system on the boat was pretty good, Nigel was a great crew and we worked well together.'

Endeavour advice: 'Get a clean start. Being spat out the back of a fleet of national champions on a start line isn't fun and it's a really difficult fleet to claw your way through.'

How they did it

Amateur

Matt Burge (30)

Profession: Vet

2014 wins: 1st Osprey national championship, Endeavour Championship

Sailing Club: Poole YC

He says: 'The thought of an Endeavour place definitely pushes me that bit harder to try and win a class nationals, and I know many of my fellow competitors feel the same.'

Preparations/tactics: 'The age-old problem with being an amateur is trying to find time around work to actually sail. Thankfully Toby (Lewis) my crew, who I snapped up before anyone else did, also has a long list of achievements and

experience to his name, so although we didn't do any specific training for the Endeavour we both had a pretty good idea of what was required to win and were able to draw on our past experiences to get the job done at the event.'

Toby tended to call tactics upwind while I concentrated on boat speed, whereas I called the downwind strategy and Toby concentrated on flying the kite. The key point is to always trust each others instincts if a quick decision needs to be taken, and where possible to share the decision-making.'

Endeavour advice: 'Just enjoy the event and fear nobody. The beauty of the Endeavour is that, thanks to the exceptionally generous support

from Topper, any boat speed or equipment advantage that someone might have in their own class, is completely removed, so it is just down to pure unadulterated sailing.'

Professional Tom Gillard (25)

Profession: Sailmaker/salesman for North Sails One Design

2014 wins: Streaker, Scorpion and Fireball nationals, Fireball Europeans

Sailing Club: Sheffield Viking SC/Hayling Island SC

He says: 'I chose to represent the Streaker because I know it better than any other class



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noted: 'It is generally a smaller boat so lighter weight crews won't be so penalised in a breeze, plus the kite is smaller and more manageable so I give it the thumbs up all round.'

Simon Hiscocks, 49er double Olympic medalist and 18ft Skiff national champion, 'These boats are a great leveler. No one has an advantage. They are actually nice boats to sail because they produced good, tight racing over short courses.'

For a full test of the Argo see page 62.

Get an invite

How do you ensure your class is represented at the Endeavour? Providing a class can produce a healthy national championship attendance (upwards of 40-50 boats) then there is no reason for an association not to receive an Endeavour invitation. Associations of eligible classes who are keen to promote their class always ensure their champion sailor is represented, and regard it as a champion sailors' duty for them to 'fly their flag' for their class.

Edwin Buckley, the Endeavour event organiser, says he is always keen to hear from classes: 'The entry limit is 25-30 boats but we are, of course, open to ideas, and are always keen to ensure we include dinghy classes celebrating significant anniversaries, for example, and in special years Olympians are invited. As a competitor, if you feel your class should be invited but you have not heard anything via your class association, send me an email at edwin@edwinbuckley.co.uk'

The next Endeavour Trophy takes

place on October 9-11, 2015.

Endeavour origins

The Endeavour Trophy is a solid silver scale model of the J-Class yacht 'Endeavour', presented annually to the 'champion of champions' at the Royal Corinthian YC in Burnham-on-Crouch.

It dates back to Tom Sopwith's America's Cup Challenge of 1934. Following a pay dispute and the dismissal of his east coast-based professional crew, Sopwith teamed up with 'Tiny' Mitchell, the commodore of the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club at the time, to recruit amateur members of the club to form a crew, sail her to America and compete in the America's Cup.

'Endeavour' won the first two races against 'Rainbow', and although she lost the series, this was the closest England ever came to winning the coveted America's Cup.

In recognition of this achievement, Robin Judah, a respected member of the RCYC, established a series of races for dinghy sailors to determine the overall 'champion of champions' from the UK's most popular racing classes. Beecher Moore, a former 'Endeavour' crew and the marketing man behind successful dinghy designer Jack Holt, joined Judah in his quest to run this event and for the overall winner presented his solid silver scale model of the yacht.

The first invitation-only race took place in 1961 and the winners were Peter Bateman and Keith Musto, representing the International Cadet class. The event is now recognised as one of the ultimate achievement in British dinghy racing. □

Champions of champions

Year	Helmsman	Crew	Class represented
2013	N Craig	A Roberts	Merlin Rocket
2012	B Saxton	A Roberts	RS200
2011	N Craig	T Lewis	OK
2010	S Bithell	C Birrel	Merlin Rocket
2009	G Carveth	Emma Clarke	RS200
2008	N Craig	T Lewis	B14
2007	S Tylecoat	T Lewis	Firefly
2006	N Craig	J Stewart	RS400
2005	N Craig	J Stewart	Finn
2004	N Craig	K Bedborough	OK
2003	R Gilbert	J Stewart	RS400
2002	G Carveth	C Davies	RS800
2001	J Hunt	P Hobson	Solo
2000	J Hunt	P Hobson	Solo
1999	G Carveth	C Davies	RS200
1998	R Estaugh	S Potts	GP14
1997	J Hunt	T Freer	Enterprise
1996	I Renilson	S Roberson	Contender
1995	M Holmes	G O'Brien	RS400
1994	C Howarth	R Estaugh	GP14
1993	G Carveth	P Rowley	Solo
1992	G Carveth	P Rowley	Solo
1991	J Lee	S Thompson	Cadet
1990	M Holmes	D Froggitt	Albacore
1989	I Pinnell	A Service	Enterprise
1988	I Southworth	D Hayes	GP14
1987	N Marsden	K Cribben	Enterprise
1986	A Gillard	C Machin	Enterprise
1985	I Southworth	R Drumgold	420
1984	I Southworth	D Hayes	Lark
1983	I Southworth	D Hayes	GP14
1982	M Holmes	M Cochran	Albacore
1981	R Estaugh	N Thompson	GP14
1980	M Holmes	M McNamara	GP14
1979	L Smith	P Barker	Fireball
1978	M Holmes	D Froggitt	Albacore
1977	L Smith	P Barker	Fireball
1976	E Owen	S Stewart	GP14
1975	P Crebbin	A Landamore	470
1974	P Crebbin	A Landamore	Albacore
1973	N Martin	Caroline Lougher	Firefly
1972	P Milanes	P Nash	Flying Dutchman
1971	F Williams	R Sheffer	Merlin Rocket
1970	R Suggitt	Mandy Watcham	Heron
1969	M Rimmer	R Suggitt	Enterprise
1968	R Hennessy	R Michael	Enterprise
1967	W Bacon	M McNamara	Enterprise
1966	B Ellis	K Ellis	Merlin Rocket
1965	M McNamara	M Rimmer	Albacore
1964	R Pitcher	R Amos	Flying Dutchman
1963	D Newman	R Martin	Firefly
1962	M Evans	R Smith	National 12
1961	P Bateman	K Musto	Cadet

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